

April 1, 2010

To: CDBG Commission

From: Tom Moen, Executive Director, East Madison Community Center (EMCC)

RE: Future Funding Priorities

I am unable to attend tonight's CDBG meeting so I am sending this letter instead. Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback regarding community needs and funding priorities. As Director of the EMCC for many, many years, I have been able to observe and respond to many of changing needs in neighborhoods on Madison's eastside (and throughout the city). As CDBG is well aware, local Community Centers are an essential link in the growth and stability in many of Madison's most challenged neighborhoods. Serving as the neighborhood focal point, effective and well managed Centers working in conjunction with area residents, can make a remarkable difference in promoting self-sufficiency and in building stronger, more independent communities.

Center's provide various resources and support for area residents to enhance self esteem, increase skills and move toward independence. Centers are capable of delivering an amazing array of diverse programming with such limited budget, that many who really understand the challenges of running a "full service" Center, scratch their heads in amazement wondering how Centers pull so many rabbits out of one hat.

So essentially, my point is, that Community Center's are often the glue of low income neighborhoods throughout Madison and need more adequate funding to better address major issues such as unemployment/underemployment, academic shortcomings and hunger. The CDBG funding invested in Madison's Center's is appreciated, yet insufficient. Even with support from CDBG, OCS and United Way, the East Madison Community Center still needs to raise \$250,000 every year, just to **maintain** it's six fulltime staff that provide 13,000 hours of programming annually while offering EMCC services seven days a week. (Fortunately the Center's six fulltime staff has nearly 75 years of experience at EMCC - which may account for *semi-magical* outcomes). The work the Center's do (job training, tutoring, nutritional meals, cultural events, computer classes, positive parenting programs...) serve to make all of Madison a better place to live.

Indeed CDBG funds have been effective in making Madison "a more viable urban community". When prioritizing upcoming CDBG allocations, I respectfully request that the CDBG Commission direct the maximum allocation possible to Community Center's and, as stated in conditions for CDBG's Goal Category Three, "consider the quality of the programming, resident participation and Center user satisfaction surveys in recommending funding". Thanks for your time.

*"The Center of Opportunity"*